

1945

Givens, Virty B. - 1945 (typescript)

MSRC Staff

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2/13/45
SOMEWHERE IN NEW GUINEA

31 January 1945

My dear Sir:

I am re - writing to you a letter which I wrote before I left the states, and which I could not mail at that time because of certain unforeseen conditions.

For almost three years now, I have been in the United States Army. For the past two years I have been in colored units which have been composed chiefly of men from the deep South. I believe that having lived closely with these men for two years, I am in a position to understand their fears, skepticism and lack of information which I feel constitutes a major part of our interracial problem in the South, the virulence which has so far contaminated our American democracy!

The NAACP during its existence has won many legal victories for our people. But the NAACP by itself can never weave a social pattern for our people which will elevate their status to that of complete respect and complete economic equality among other groups of people in the South.

Dr. Mordecai Johnson of Howard University has offered a very helpful plan toward the solution of our problem by encouraging the graduates of Howard University to go to the South and live and work among the people there for a few years at least - or better yet, for a lifetime! Each year a few graduates of Howard University have gone to the South. They have lived and worked there and their experiences have been as beneficial to them as their labors were to the people whom they served.

Many more of young people would pioneer in the South after the completion of their college work if it were not for the fact that we as a race are too willing to permit them to be martyrs. For example, a young doctor who has had to work and save his pennies in order to complete his medical training wants to look forward to obtaining a decent living income, and an office with modern equipment as soon as possible after his "starvation period" of schooling has been passed. The same thing applies to our ministers and teachers and others who have entered all fields of professional life. And we might well ask: why shouldn't these young people feel this way? And why couldn't we have some organization which could supply their needs? Such an organization could select each year our most highly qualified young people - our potential experts and leaders - who are approaching graduation, and encourage them to go South and work. These persons would be guaranteed a living wage for a certain period of time, and such other assistance as would enable them to provide themselves with up-to-date professional equipment.

It would thus be relatively easy for these young experts to elevate our people, to bring about an understanding between them and other groups in the South. They would be enabled to remove many of the barriers which confront our people. This would establish a foundation which would make our returning soldiers feel proud that they had fought in a war which won for them and their people more advantages and greater privileges.

An organization such as that outlined above could be easily supported by our churches, newspapers and business institutions interested in improving the conditions of All people in our American Democracy.

Sincerely yours,

Pfc. V. B. Givens

PFC. V. B. GIVENS

Philippine Islands

April 20, 1945

Mr. James N. Nabrit,
Secretary of Howard University,
Washington 1, D. C.

My dear Sir:

I am writing to you in regards to my letter of January 31, which was addressed to Dr. Thompson, but was later passed on to you. I shall be very pleased to receive your opinion on the matter as well as your advice.

I am,

Sincerely yours

V. B. Givens
Pfc. V. B. Givens

LUZON

23 June 1945.

Mr. James M. Nabrit,
Secretary of Howard University,
Washington 1, D.C.

My dear Mr. Nabrit:

Your letter of greeting reached me a few days ago and it was closely followed by the Howard Bulliten of February 1, 1945. It is difficult for me to convey the depth of my gratitude to you and to Howard University for sending me these "gifts"; or can I express the pride and the feeling of grandeur which I experienced as I shared them with my fellow soldiers and Philippino friends.

College life , for me, was not always easy, but I am very glad that I selected Howard University for my school.

Very Sincerely Yours,
Virty B. Givens
Virty B. Givens